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Capitalist Propaganda

Defenders of capitalism have not always been so coy in making reference to capitalism, the capitalist class and the working class. The early capitalists and their supporters acknowledged the existence of both the working class and the capitalist class. The journal, HOLLANDISCHE MERCURIUS, for example, used “*capitalists*” in the years 1633 and 1654 to refer to the owners of capital (THE WHEELS OF COMMERCE: CIVILIZATION AND CAPITALISM 15th–18th Century, Fernand Braudel p.232). And according to the OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY (OED), *capitalism* was first used in 1855 by the novelist William Makepeace Thackeray in his novel THE NEWCOMES, where he used this to mean “*having ownership of capital*” (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capitalism>).

Nor did Marx invent the political concept of class as some of his more naive and simple-minded critics have claimed. And the political class struggle was certainly not a cold war Soviet policy as one foolish trade union leader once remarked to a TUC conference shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. The 18th century French Historian, Augustan Thierry, was referred to by Marx as the “*father of the class struggle*” (Letter from Marx to Engels July 27th 1854 CORRESPONDENCE, p.87) while the political economist, David Ricardo in his book PRINCIPLES OF POLITICAL ECONOMY AND TAXATION (1817) takes as given, the existence of the three classes – workers, capitalists and landowners.

Ricardo’s reference to the various classes of his own day appeared in the opening chapter of the PRINCIPLES, when he analysed their relationship as a function of their respective economic interests. In fact, one 20th century economist, Friedrich von Weiser of the Austrian School of economics, was so alarmed by the content of Ricardo’s writings on class and the development of a labour theory of value that he warned his students that “*Ricardo led straight to Marx*”.

Unlike the Classical School of economists, who believed in the harmony of classes, Marx emphasised the importance of class conflict and class struggle. This difference of emphasis is bought out in the way political economists debated each other at the time and the use made by Marx of an aggressive polemical style against opponents in his critique of political economy. The gentlemanly exchange of correspondence between Ricardo defending the interests of the industrial capitalist and Thomas Malthus defending the interests of the landed aristocracy is in marked contrast to the constant ridicule Marx employed against Malthus for his hostile comments against the working class, referring to him in one place in CAPITAL as a “*superficial plagiarist*”.

Class was defined by Marx in an objective way by its relationship to the ownership of the means of production and distribution. In capitalism there were two classes, the capitalist class and the working class; the former who owned the means of production like raw resources, factories, communication and transport systems and distribution points and the latter who did not.

It was only when the capitalist class had seen off the last remnants of Feudalism and began to confront an organised working class, economically with the advent of trade unions and later, politically, with the rise of the Chartist movement, that capitalism's hired gunslingers tried either to break the working class up into competing groups and factions or deny its existence altogether. From the about the 1830's to the present day defenders of capitalism have used a number of political strategies to avoid using "*working class*" and "*capitalist class*" in their presentation of capitalism. This strategy is not a "*political conspiracy*" in the way it is taken by conspiracy theorists, but it is nevertheless a deliberate political strategy used in the class struggle to check Socialist ideas; one among many attempts to bind the working class to the interests of capital.

Today, class is presented by capitalism's sociologists as a passive hierarchal social ladder, such as the recent BBC report with its eight gradations of class (The Great British Class Survey April 3rd 2013). This misrepresentation of class is a deliberate move to portray society as conflict-free with everyone behaving as aspirational consumers more interested in shopping than politics. What has to be suppressed at all costs is the existence of a working class majority with the revolutionary potential to change society. Questions about the social relations of classes to the ownership of the means of production and distribution are conveniently avoided. Such a divisive and weaselly classification fragments the working class and deliberately labels a large section of the working class as "*middle class*" with its own values and interests. In "THE GREAT BRITISH CLASS SURVEY" the capitalist class has disappeared altogether to be replaced by "*an elite*" made up of Oxbridge educated "*professional*"; workers with large salaries and a rarefied cultural indulgence in Wagnerian opera, smart restaurants and fine wine. No one, it appears, lives off the unearned income of rent, interest and profit; all very convenient for the capitalist class. Hidden from view the capitalists can accumulate capital and consume their unearned social wealth without fear or favour.

Socialists fully understand why the capitalist class want its system defended and for this political defence to present the capitalists and capitalism in a good light.

The capitalist class has an interest in retaining its life of privilege and luxury. As a class, capitalists will not give up voluntarily their ownership of the means of production and distribution. The capitalist class spends vast amounts of money supporting political parties and owning the media to ensure that its interests and its interests alone predominate in society to the detriment of Socialist ideas. As Marx noted in THE GERMAN IDEOLOGY (1846), those ideas which dominate in class society are those of the ruling class

And the host of free market institutes, like the mis-named Adam Smith Institute, The Centre for Policy Studies, Civitas, and the Institute of Economic Affairs on the one hand and the Keynesian think tanks like Progress, The Social Market Foundation, the Institute for Public Policy Research and the Fabian Society on the other, all do a very good job in defending capitalism on behalf of those who bankroll these organisations. Never has the capitalist class had so many self-important "*policy wonks*" beaver away in Policy Institutes on their behalf.

Another political strategy favoured by some defenders of capitalism is to deny the existence of society and social systems altogether. This crass and vulgar strategy is associated with supporters of market fundamentalism, a fictional account of the world in which atomised individuals exist only to "*truck, barter and trade*" in an ever competitive market environment. Margaret Thatcher echoed this view, after reading too much F. A. Hayek, when she announced to a stunned reporter from WOMAN'S OWN: "*There is no such thing as society*" (October 31st 1987). And it was Mrs Thatcher who then went on to claim "*there is no alternative to the market*", a groundless dogma known as "*TINA*" for short (Mr Cameron recently resurrected "*TINA*" to defend the Coalition's economic austerity programme against its critics). Beware the politics of dogmatism and certainty for it is always followed by political hubris and destruction. And the dogmatic certainty of economic liberalism is breath-taking in its arrogance.

However, the dogmatic certainty behind *TINA* hides a suppressed and hidden fear of all dogmatists – that they might be wrong. There is indeed a rational alternative to capitalism (*TIARA*); Socialism. There is a Socialist alternative to commodity production and exchange for profit. Production and distribution in Socialism would be democratically planned just to meet the social needs of all society. There does not have to be the private ownership of the means of production and distribution, nor State bureaucrats telling people what to consume, nor the tyranny of the market forcing workers into wage slavery and class exploitation.

And defenders of capitalism, despite their dogmatic certainty, have a very real problem when it comes to accounting for economic crises and trade depressions. Economic liberalism believes unquestionably in Say's Law; that sellers will always bring buyers to the market and that commodity production and exchange for profit is harmonious and crisis-free. However Marx showed that just because someone has sold a commodity does not necessary mean he has to buy another. If this state of affairs persists over time and is generalised to one or more sectors of the economy then the unsold commodities or overproduction leads on to an economic crisis, trade depression and high levels of unemployment (CAPITAL VOLUME 1. p. 113). *De omnibus dubitandum (doubt everything)* was Marx's motto.

Periodic crises and trade depressions have damaging political consequences for politicians who uncritically accept the theories of economic liberalism that capitalism is crisis-free. We only have to consider the ill-conceived remarks by the former Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, that there was going to be "*no more boom and bust*" as a reminder of political hubris. Economists up to 2008 had been telling politicians that the economic cycle was over. The economist Professor Robert Lucas, for example, stated:

"Macroeconomics...has succeeded. It's central problem of depression-prevention has been solved for all practical purposes, and has in fact been solved for many decades" (Presidential Address to the American Economic Association, 2003).

Companies have gone bankrupt, millions of workers have lost their jobs or have been forced into part-time work, bankers have been stripped of their knighthoods and prevented from holding financial positions in the City; governments have lost elections; politicians have drowned in ignominious failure but the economists and their theories carry on as if nothing has happened. Economic liberalism is still being taught in universities and its advocates are still enjoying professorships, appointments to important government committees, winning Nobel Prizes and have an open-door to the media to proclaim their discredited theories.

Politicians have an almost theological belief in capitalism. Gordon Brown in particular should have remembered his Sunday school lessons particularly the proverb "*pride goes before a fall*" (PROVERBS, 16:18). Political failure and destruction will always await those who place their trust in capitalism, particularly when they have no understanding of the profit system and the economic laws which act on commodity production and exchange for profit. There is an alternative to capitalism and that is the Socialism of Marx and the Socialist Party of Great Britain. It is a Socialism that has never existed but remains necessary and urgent. Socialism will mean a classless society and it will mean that production for use will take place within the framework of the common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution by all of society.

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War in Mali

Following on fast from its military intervention in Libya, the French have entered into Mali with 2,500 troops in an attempt to push Islamist rebels back into the desert wasteland to the North of the Country in order to protect its raw resource, trade route and strategic interests in the region

Why the political adventurism?

First there are the gold mines and mineral deposits to be found in Mali, some of which have already been mined.

Second, there is the increasing competition from China in the continent of Africa for uranium and oil supplies for their respective economies.

Third, Mali is a key country in the middle of West Africa, and is an important route to Niger, the main supplier of uranium for French nuclear power plants; French nuclear energy firm Areva has mined 100,000 tons of uranium since 1968 in neighboring Niger and plans to open the world's second-largest uranium mine there in 2014.

And the fourth, and perhaps more important reason for French capitalism and the West generally is securing the potential strategic transport route for Sub-Saharan oil and gas exports through to the West where there is also the possibility of a connection from the Taoudeni basin to European markets through Algeria and its coastal ports. Algiers has five strategic coastal ports the main one being in the capital city of Algiers.

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-war-on-mali-what-you-should-know/5319093>).

The problem for Western capitalism is not only the aggressive competition in the region from countries like China and Russia but also from the hostile terrain in which Western capitalist companies have to mine and drill. The principle function of capitalist governments is to protect the private ownership of the means of production and distribution. And when it comes to the protection or plunder of raw resources, trade routes and strategic points of influence then military action is a considered option.

The use of the armed forces to protect the strategic interests of a capitalist country is entered into whether the government is avowedly capitalist or claims to be “*Socialist*” as in the case of President Hollande’s “*Socialist*” Party. Capitalist governments will use military force to further the interests of the capitalist class no matter what the government calls itself and the excuses it gives to the working class to justify this military action; “*war on terrorism*”, “*Democracy*” and so on.

And neighbouring Algeria has recently demonstrated the very real vulnerability that can occur to gas and oil production. At stake are billions of dollars in the wider Maghreb and West Africa region in which dozens of Western companies operate and now need security from potential threats to their commercial interests.

The Islamic terrorist attack on the Amenas gas facility in the remote South Eastern part of the country in January 2013 has meant further military intervention in the region is unavoidable; whether it be military action taken by one country alone like France or from a combination of NATO countries like in the case of Libya.

Continued conflict and war in the region is likely for decades to come; a point David Cameron underlined to the House of Commons shortly after committing British support to France. Micro wars appear to be how war is to be fought in the 21st century although the increasing clash of interests in the Pacific area between the US and China might lead to even a greater conflict. History might just repeat itself; the rush to Africa in the late 19th century set a path to the First World War while the struggle over trade routes and access to raw materials set in train which led the conflict in 1942 between the US and Japan during the Second World War.

Raw resources like oil and gas are a constant problem for capitalist countries and the reason for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The continent of Africa is no different. As Fadel Gheit, a senior energy analyst at the New York City – based investment Oppenheimer & Co remarked:

“Oil companies will have to factor in completely different security measures. These facilities are absolutely naked”

And it will fall on companies to either hire mercenary security guards – a huge and growing industry in its own rights as seen in Iraq and Afghanistan where it is currently worth £6 billion a year - or the oil industry will have to be protected by continuous State intervention from the respective governments of oil, gas and mineral companies working in the region.

None of this comes as a surprise to Socialists. Capitalism is divided up into competing nation states over the struggle for raw resources, securing strategic points of influence and the protection of trade routes.

What of the capitalist left huddling under the tattered umbrella of the “*Stop the War Coalition*”? They do not know who to support. They do not know whether to support the Islamists or someone else so long as it is not the US and its allies. At an International Conference “*Confronting War Today*”, speaker after speaker from the Stop the War Coalition gave angry speeches about the iniquity of President Obama, David Cameron and President Hollande. There was plenty of moral outrage but no Socialist analysis of war and the cause of war. And nor was there any discussion on what practical Socialist political action was needed to actually stop war. Given that the main speakers were Tariq Ali and Tony Benn it is hardly surprising.

While the capitalist Left decide who to support in the conflict in Mali, Socialists take no sides in the periodic conflicts which afflict world capitalism. We do not give support to one capitalist group, say Israel, against a potential capitalist group in Palestine just as we do not give support to one capitalist government against a potential ruling class who happen to have embedded themselves within Islamic terrorist groups in the region.

Instead Socialists call on the working class to recognise capitalism as the cause of conflict and war. War is caused by capitalism and national rivalry. The working class has no interest in war or engaging in war on behalf of their employers. As Marx rightly said “*workers have no country*”. The Socialist Party of Great Britain has a long history of opposing all war on the ground of class and working class interest. We have constantly told the working class that the only way of preventing war is to abolish capitalism and establish Socialism. And such recognition by a working class majority can only lead to a conscious and political socialist movement to abolish capitalism and commodity exchange for profit and replaced with common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution by all of society in which production just takes place to meet human need.

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Capitalism: A Force For Good Or Evil

Unpopular capitalism

Up until 2008 economists, politicians and capitalists would meet in the alpine resort of Davos to celebrate capitalism and its supposed magnificence. However, since the economic crises and subsequent trade depression in the August of that year there have been many long faces and acrimonious squabbles between sections of the capitalist class meeting there; notably between industrialists and bankers and their respective politicians.

Questions have been asked of capitalism and what went wrong. Fingers have been pointed at the once smug economists who had told politicians that economic crises were a thing of the past. “*No more economic crises and depressions*” they squawked from their gilded cages in academia.

Outside the plush conference halls and expensive restaurants – it costs £25,000 per delegate to attend the Davos jolly - the anti-capitalist protestors appeared to have a case against the profit system with its greed and anti-social purpose. Austerity is affecting the lives of the working class everywhere; the unemployment rate in Spain alone is 26% and in Greece the striking metro train drivers struggling against cuts to their pay and conditions were forced back to work on pain of imprisonment.

The economic depression in the US with its high levels of unemployment continues unabated while in Britain the economic chill matches the April weather. Yet the wealth of the capitalist class is almost unimaginable – and growing. According to Oxfam, the top 100 billionaires received \$240 billion in 2012, about 40% of the world’s entire wealth.

David Cameron has noticed that capitalism is having a bad press. There are no signs of a popular capitalism. So he took the opportunity on his visit to Davos this January to give, what the journalist Patience Wheatcroft called, “*A robust defence of capitalism*” (EVENING STANDARD 29th January 2013). In fact Cameron’s defence of capitalism was limp and withering. Robust it was not.

In his speech, Cameron referred only once to “*authoritarian capitalism*”; a warning of the threat posed by China’s economic and political model being adopted by developing capitalist countries at the expense of “*Western liberal capitalism*”. China’s growth rate and ability to move capital fast has excited many European capitalists who see their own economies weighed down by debt, overarching reliance on the finance sector, an unaffordable welfare state, too much tax and red-tape bureaucracy.

Not once in his speech did Cameron show any understanding of the basis of capitalism with its contradictions and

conflicts, nor did he grasp the economic laws acting upon commodity production and exchange for profit and nor could he explain why capitalism had passed into an economic crisis and subsequent trade depression in the US and Western Europe.

Cameron's own ignorance of capitalism only mirrored those of the "*anti-capitalist*" protestors outside the conference hall in the cold alpine winter snow. The protestors wanted "*fairness*", "*increased government regulation*" and "*retribution against greedy bankers*". However, capitalism cannot be reformed to work in the interest of all society; neither by regulation nor by the punishment of the bankers.

In fact there is nothing "*wrong*" with capitalism as it passes from a period of "*boom*" into economic crisis and depression. As Marx showed, unemployment and its rise to peak levels at a certain period in the trade cycle arise out of the structure of capitalism itself, and these events are therefore inevitable while capitalism lasts. An understanding of the economic laws acting on "*capital in motion*" escapes the arid wasteland of moral outrage and the politics of reform.

Are there good capitalists?

Defenders of capitalism do not want the profit system to be depicted in a bad light while moral sentiment against greed and selfishness is in fact no argument at all against capitalism. Competition and amassing capital is at the very heart of the profit system. Moral outrage changes nothing.

In her own article Ms Wheatcroft gives examples of who she believes are "*good capitalists*" – Henry Wellcome, for example, who left his fortune to charity and the work of contemporary philanthropists like Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffet who have recently all set up charitable foundations.

However, Ms Wheatcroft does not ask where the profit to fund all these charitable works came from in the first place. Like David Cameron, her understanding of capitalism and how it works as a system of class exploitation is based on economic ignorance. She cannot explain why "*we are continuing to endure economic misery that has left the majority feeling significantly worse off*". As for her "*answer*" to this economic misery of spreading the pain "*evenly*" across the entire population, it is nothing more than wishful thinking.

When Cameron tells "*us*" we have to live austere lives for the next ten years he does not mean the capitalist class. Bernie Ecclestone's daughter blew over £30,000 on champagne in one sitting at a night club, more than the average British salary of £26,500 (DAILY MAIL 30th Jan 2013). Visit the playgrounds of the rich throughout the world and there is not much evidence of austerity.

Although politicians like David Cameron and journalists like Patience Wheatcroft have been forced to begrudgingly acknowledge the existence of capitalism, even though they do not have the foggiest ideas of how the economy works, they are extremely reticent in discussing why capitalists exist as a distinct class and how they exploit the working class in the productive process.

Capitalists are individuals but it is as a class that they have economic and political significance. They are not a discrete group of individuals any more than workers are, but instead they form a diametrically opposite class to the interests of the working class based on the ownership or non-ownership of the means of production and distribution.

In owning the means of production and distribution – the raw resources, factories, communication and transport system and distribution points - the capitalist class force the working class onto to the labour market to sell their ability to work or labour power for a wage or salary.

The function of the capitalist class is to ensure the exploitation of the working class; the generation of surplus value from workers and the expansion of value from one circuit of production to the next. Marx refers to the capitalist class as the "*personification of capital*" because what drives this class forward under the pain of competition is the accumulation of capital as an anti-social objective.

Marx's own understanding of Capitalism

Marx gave a sound and valid understanding of capitalism in his three volume work CAPITAL. Marx did not discover the working class, but he did reveal the way the working class is exploited by the capitalist class in the productive process and why the working class was also a revolutionary class in resolving the contradictions thrown up by generalised commodity production and exchange for profit.

Marx showed that the labour power sold by the working class as a commodity in exchange for a wage has a value through being determined by the socially necessary time required to produce this commodity. The value of labour power depends on the amount of socially necessary labour to produce the essential necessities of social existence for the worker and their family under capitalism – food, clothes, housing and so on.

However, during the working week the working class works a necessary labour time. During this time the working class produce the value of their wages. But if this takes 25 hours of a 37 hour week the working class still have to continue working a surplus labour time of 12 hours.

During the period of surplus labour time the working class produce a surplus value congealed in the commodities they produce for their employers. And when these commodities are sold on the market they realise a profit which is shared out among the capitalist class in the form of unearned income of rent, Interest and profit.

The exploitation of the working class by the capitalist class takes place in “*authoritarian countries*” and “*liberal countries*” alike. The capitalist class in China exploits the working class just as the capitalist class do elsewhere throughout the world.

Exploitation takes place whether the capitalists are good, bad or indifferent towards the workers they employ; whether they evade tax or give to charitable causes; pay themselves huge bonuses or give money to capitalist political parties like the Tories, Labour and the Liberal Democratic Party.

The exploitation generates not only a class struggle over the intensity and extent of exploitation but also a political struggle by a revolutionary working class to free the forces of production including social labour from the impediment imposed by capitalist class relations.

Who won the class war?

For Bill gates and Warren Buffet to give away a sizeable proportion of their wealth is only to say that they are giving away a portion of their unearned income which has been derived from the exploitation of the working class in the first place. If Socialism existed and there was free and direct access to what people needed to live creative and worthwhile lives there would be no need for charity.

Although Cameron and other politicians shy away from using the terms “*capitalist class*” and “*class struggle*”, lest we forget, it was Warren Buffet who said of the class struggle: “*My class has won: and it has been a rout*”. Of course, it is too premature for Mr Buffet to say his class has won, but it does give a lie to the claims made by defenders of the capitalist class that the class struggle does not exist. Buffet clearly does not see the class struggle as an invention of Soviet policy but a conflict between his class and the working class.

Capitalism is neither good nor bad because the Socialist case against capitalism is not a moral one. Capitalism deliberately underproduces to the requirements of the market not in meeting human need. Capitalism can never work for “*the greater good*” as Ms Wheatcroft misleadingly believes because the profit system exists only to serve the privilege and comfort of the minority capitalist class.

Accumulation of capital and the self-expansion of value is the anti-social object of capitalist production not to meet human need. And capital always moves in a contradictory and socially destructive way.

When capitalism passes through an economic depression the pain can never be spread evenly but only onto the lives of workers and their families. And this is why Mr Buffet is wrong to believe the capitalist class has won. Capitalists could only win by demonstrating that capitalism can be run in the interest of all society; that it produces for people rather than for profit; and it no longer causes social problems like war, poverty and unemployment. They can't. Everywhere in the world the negative experience of capitalism by the working class shows Buffet's claim to be moonshine.

Wheatcroft's worry is that people will begin to look "*for different answers*". Quite right; they should, but not from the failed politics of nationalisation to be found in the USSR in the 1930's which was only a different form of exploitative capitalism to the one existing at the time in the US and Britain. State bureaucrats producing five year plans and telling people what they can and cannot consume is not Socialism. Instead the working class should look to a Socialist answer to their problems and take conscious and political action to replace capitalist production and exchange for profit by the common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution by all of society.

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Correspondence

Dear Sirs

I like the articles and the analysis but I feel:

- 1. The articles have a revolutionary hope. I am not against revolution but I doubt it will ever happen though it may well be needed; and the repression, injustice and inequality and hardships can be even worse after revolution. This diminishes the very good factual analysis.*
- 2. There is a dwindling of resources in the world, "peak everything"; exploitation I agree is part of it but not the most; the fact is the only sustainable level of people on the earth was before oil took a sustainable population of less than ?1 billion or ?2 billion to an unsustainable ?6 or more billion. This is unsustainable and will be nothing but grief. Organising anything whether socialist or capitalist in this circumstance is just avoiding this.*

Neil Scott

PS: I am a typist and work hard for a small amount of money and have no job security, no holidays and have seen (I am 50) a choice of jobs when younger to my job now where the employer (I am "self-employed" (a meaningless term)) calls all the shots.

Our Reply:

Thank you for your e-mail. You have raised some interesting and important points.

We have often been asked about this question by thoughtful people. Would a revolution result in 'NEWS FROM NOWHERE' Utopia as envisaged by William Morris in 1890, or is it more likely to produce a totalitarian system – like Stalin's Russia or Orwell's '1984'? Would Socialism be better or worse than capitalism? But we feel you have answered this yourself in the Postscript where you describe your own working conditions – that of a wage-slave in a period of capitalism's periodic depression.

Such economic depressions are not unprecedented. Capitalism does go from boom to bust. Economists and politicians have no explanation for this trade cycle, and so are unable to predict when the next bust is going to happen; they are just like weather-forecasters, who can only describe what is happening, not explain when, where, or why the next flood or other disaster is likely to strike. (The insurance industry would love it if they could!)

Marx was the first to give a good explanation as to why this economic cycle happens.

Please note our frequent articles in SOCIALIST STUDIES in previous years on the subject of this trade depression, and its effects – especially on the housing market.

Then there is the problem of sustainability. You are right to point out that capitalism has gobbled up Planet Earth's resources to the point where we have reached '*peak*' everything, especially oil - even Saudi Arabia is predicted to become a net importer in a few years. Trawlers of a number of countries are wiping out the oceans' once-abundant fish stocks, and even krill in Antarctica are now at risk.

The competitive nature of the capitalist system is largely responsible for the wiping out of fish stocks, just as it is responsible for destroying and using up non-renewable mineral resources like coal and oil. While capitalism lasts, so will this destructive competition between nations, companies and even individuals.

Socialists argue that Socialism would be a co-operative society, where people would work together, with and for each other. True, there would be many problems left over from capitalism – e.g. the problem of looking after nuclear waste. But only by co-operation can people deal with these. And Socialism is the only answer.

We can only establish Socialism by getting rid of the class system, which as you know, exploits workers like you – we urge you to join us in working to achieve this.

THE MYTH OF OVERPOPULATION

The stark fact is that capitalism is responsible for the starvation of millions of people. Given modern technology, famine is avoidable; whenever it occurs the blame must be laid at the door of the social system which is inherently incapable of meeting human needs. It is not overpopulation that is the problem but the chronic, and often planned, underproduction that is a built-in feature of capitalism. Only when the fetters which capitalism places on production have been removed by establishing the common ownership of the means of life can mankind set about ending the threat of famine

Not only is capitalism in effect a system of artificial scarcity, it is also a system of organised waste. The most obvious example is the huge amount of wealth used up in training and keeping armed forces and in developing the most destructive weapons of war

The Myth of Overpopulation QUESTIONS OF THE DAY 1978 p71-72

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Wage Slaves and Wage Slavery

In a village called Chalky Mount on the East Coast of Barbados, villagers carry a whip when herding cows or small livestock to be milked unaware of its history. In fact what they carried is a "*hunter*" whip once used to beat slaves on the sugar plantations. The "*hunter*" whip was described by William Dickson, who had lived in Barbados during the 1770's and 1780's. In his classic work on British West Indian slavery he wrote:

The instrument of correction commonly used in Barbadoes, is called a cow-skin, without which a negro driver would [not] . . . think of going into the field . . . It is composed of leathern thongs, platted in the common way, and tapers from the end of the handle (within which is a short bit of wood) to the point, which is furnished with a lash of silk-grass, hard platted and knotted, like that of a horse-whip but thicker. Its form gives it some degree of elasticity towards the handle; and when used with severity . . . it tears the flesh, and brings blood at every stroke (LETTERS ON SLAVERY London, 1789 pp. 14-15).

<http://hitchcock.etc.virginia.edu/Slavery/details.php?categorynum=16&theRecord=44&recordCount=74>

In slavery exploitation was transparent. The slave produced goods, farmed the land and picked cotton at hours

dictated to by the slave-owner who kept all that was produced while ensuring the slave and his family were fed, housed and in good condition to continue to work the following day.

However the slave was the property of the slave owner and the slave owner enjoyed legal controls over his slaves and could inflict punishment including beatings and even death on slaves who refused to work, tried to escape or rebelled against their condition of servility.

Slavery has never entirely been replaced even in modern capitalism. The number of slaves recorded in 2010 was over 12 million according to the United Nations' international labour organisation (ILO).
http://www.ilo.org/global/Themes/Forced_Labour/lang--en/index.htm.

The average cost of buying a slave in today's market is \$90.

Most of the slaves identified by the ILO are debt slaves, largely living in south Asia, who are under debt bondage incurred by lenders, sometimes, even for generations. However if trafficking is included in the figures the numbers approach some 21 million people almost equivalent to the entire British workforce.

However the dominant form of exploitation in world capitalism is wage labour where workers sell their labour power to capitalists on the labour market in exchange for a wage and salary. In commodity production workers produce not only the value equivalent to their wage and salary but a surplus value which passes to the capitalist class in the form of rent, interest and profit.

Wage Exploitation

How is the working class exploited?

Unlike chattel slavery and Feudalism, exploitation under capitalism is veiled by the economic relationships between buyers and sellers “*freely*” meeting on the market. Opponents of slavery like the ILO and particularly trade unions have no problem with the wages system as long as the wages being paid are “*fair*”. In economic text books there is no critique of wages, the labour market and the buying and selling of labour power.

All these economic features of capitalism are seen by economists as unproblematic and taken for granted. Some economists even praise wage-labour as a social and economic freedom enjoyed by workers in preference to previous social systems where labour was bound by slavery and serfdom.

Unlike the slave owner, the capitalist does not need legal controls over the working class in terms of ownership and confinement to a particular place or locality. Instead the capitalists make their wealth by owning the means of production and distribution to the exclusion of the working class and employing wage labour on a contractual basis where they gain access to the use-value of the commodity Marx called **labour power**.

In this respect workers, unlike slaves or serfs, are free in two senses of the word. Workers are free from the ownership of the raw resources, factories, and machinery, transport and communication and distribution points. And workers are also free not to work for an employer although they might starve if they do not find employment.

Marx's fellow Socialist, Frederick Engels gave an early commentary on the difference between slavery and wage labour. According to Engels:

The slave is sold once and for all, the proletarian must sell himself daily and hourly. The individual slave, property of one master, is assured an existence, however miserable it may be, because of the master's interest. The individual proletarian, property as it were of the entire bourgeois class which buys his labour only when someone has need of it, has no secure existence (THE PRINCIPLE OF COMMUNISM
<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/11.prin-com.htm>)

While Marx in WAGE-LABOUR AND CAPITAL wrote:

The worker leaves the capitalist, to whom he has sold himself, as often as he chooses, and the capitalist discharges him as often as he sees fit, as soon as he no longer gets any use, or not the required use, out of him. But the worker, whose only source of income is the sale of his labour power, cannot leave THE WHOLE CLASS OF BUYERS, i.e., the capitalist class, unless he gives up his own existence. He does not belong to this or to that capitalist, but to the CAPITALIST CLASS; and it is for him to find his man, i.e., to find a buyer in this capitalist class (loc cit)

So how are workers exploited as a class? To understand how exploitation works, workers must have some acquaintance with the scientific ideas of Karl Marx contained in pamphlets like WAGE, PRICE AND PROFIT and his three volume work, CAPITAL.

Marx showed that workers sell their labour power or ability to work to capitalists for a wage and salary. In a working week of eight hours a day it might take the working class five hours to produce enough commodities to equal the wage or salary needed to produce and reproduce the workers and their families as a working class. Marx called this **necessary working time**.

However, because workers are contracted to work an eight hour day they have to continue working for a further three hours a day which Marx referred to as **surplus labour time**.

In this period of surplus labour time workers produce **surplus value** and it is from the sale of commodities on the market, produced by the working class, that the capitalist class realise surplus value as profit. Profit is then divided up into the unearned income of rent to the rentier, interest to the banks and profit to the industrial capitalist.

Many workers and certainly the defenders of capitalism do not see employment as wage slavery. Economists, for example, view wage labour freely choosing who they want to work for. However the argument that workers are imprisoned within a wages system of wage slavery can be substantiated by looking at the question of class and the ownership of the means of production and distribution in its totality.

Capitalism's economists do not look at the question of economics in terms of class ownership, class relations, class struggle and class interest. The subject-matter of economics is conveniently confined to individual buyers and sellers, supply and demand and prices.

However the buying and selling of labour power is a class issue because opposing classes with different class interests can only arise in capitalism where a capitalist class minority monopolises the means of production to the exclusion of a working class majority. Within capitalism the worker is never free from capital and the power of capital. As Marx noted; the worker belongs to the capitalist class a whole.

Wage Slavery: Metaphor or Reality?

So, is the term “*wage slavery*” a metaphor or a social reality? Socialists argue that wage slavery represents a very real social condition of life under capitalism and it not a metaphor or piece of rhetoric. Wage slavery is just as real as chattel slavery. One similarity, for example, between wage slavery and chattel slavery is that in both social systems a subservient class is put to work for the benefit of a small private property owning class.

WIKIPEDIA has a useful entry on wage slavery showing that the first articulate use of the phrase “*wage slavery*” dates from 1763 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wage_Slavery. However “*wage slavery*” is cited as a purely descriptive definition rooted in historical usage and does not give a Marxian explanation of the differences and similarities between chattel slavery and the wages system. The entry also evades a Marxian explanation of the exploitive process of the wages system.

Nevertheless, the WIKIPEDIA entry for wage slavery does record how early workers referred to their condition of employment as wage slavery by recalling the 1836 strike by female workers at Lowell Mill. The striking workers highlighted the degradation and humiliation of the wages system and wage slavery in the following protest song:

*Oh! Isn't it a pity, such a pretty girl as I
Should be sent to the factory to pine away and die?,BR> Oh! I cannot be a slave, I will not be a slave,
For I am fond of liberty
That I cannot be a slave*

The coercion of the wages system which forces the working class into employment is as very real as the hunter whip described by William Dickson which forced the slaves into the cotton and sugar plantations. The coercion is in the absence of workers owning the means of production and distribution; a non-ownership which prevents workers producing and distributing goods and services just for human need.

And the coercive power of the wages system rations what workers receive to the level of their wage and salary income. As a consequence workers are denied direct access to what they and their families need to live worthwhile and creative lives.

And within employment, the working class are forced to confront what they produce as a commodity fetish; something alien which dominates their lives. And then there is the stress, worry and, uncertainty of employment where the workplace is often a hostile and dangerous environment in which workers are forced to compete with other workers, where workers are bullied and pressurised by managers to meet targets and where workers are coerced to be increasingly more productive and to produce more and more commodities in as little time as possible.

During employment workers lose control over time and time controls their activity denying them the most basic of all human needs; creative and fulfilling work. And no one asked the working class if they wanted the wages system forced upon them. They did not vote for the wages system into existence any more than they cheerfully agreed that wage labour was a good idea. The wages system was imposed by the capitalist class on the working class.

If the employer no longer has the sanction of the whip – and we should not forget that children in the 19th century cotton mills were often beaten with straps - then there is the threat to the working class of redundancy, dismissal, being fired, shed like leaves, unemployed, sacked, re-structured, de-skilled, locked out and so on.

Workers also face physical violence, imprisonment and death when the State – *the executive of the bourgeoisie* – uses the police and troops to break strikes.

Striking coal miners in South Africa were recently shot by the police, in many parts of the world trade union activity leads to imprisonment and sometimes torture and while the last Labour government used troops on two occasions to break strikes by the fire service union.

And Marx gave a clear warning to workers who do not look consciously and politically beyond the wages system when he wrote at the end of his pamphlet, *VALUE, PRICE AND PROFIT*:

At the same time, and quite apart from the general servitude involved in the wages system, the working class ought not to exaggerate to themselves the ultimate working of these everyday struggles. They ought not to forget that they are fighting with effects, but not with the causes of those effects; that they are retarding the downward movement, but not changing its direction; that they are applying palliatives, not curing the malady. They ought, therefore, not to be exclusively absorbed in these unavoidable guerrilla fights incessantly springing up from the never ceasing encroachments of capital or changes of the market. They ought to understand that, with all the miseries it imposes upon them, the present system simultaneously engenders the material conditions and the social forms necessary for an economical reconstruction of society. Instead of the conservative motto: "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work!" they ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword: "Abolition of the wages system!"
<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1865/value-price-profit/ch03.htm#c14>

THE POSITION OF THE WORKERS

Whatever their standard of living, the position of the workers is always that of having to struggle to maintain their wages. The vast and wonderful improvements in the productive process mean stupendous wealth for the owners, but the workers do not obtain a share in the increase unless some change occurs which gives them added strength in the

struggle, and ...machinery and improved methods leading to more unemployment always place limits on such tendency. All the reforms and all the philanthropy cannot touch this position. Remove the unemployed to-day; tomorrow machinery will have produced them again. Give the workers free houses or free bread – they must struggle just as hard for the remainder of their necessities. Attempts at reform are always in the long run useless. They are defeated by the operation of the economic forces of Capitalism. The only way out is to establish a new system of Society (The Position of the Workers, QUESTIONS OF THE DAY Socialist Party of Great Britain 1942 p7).

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The Capitalist Left and Wage Slavery

The object of the Socialist Party of Great Britain is for a Socialist majority to consciously and politically abolish the wages system through the revolutionary use of the vote and parliament in order to gain control of the machinery of government.

Socialists want to see the end to wage slavery and for wage slaves to be replaced by an association of free men and women who are no longer forced onto the labour market to sell their labour power to an employer for a wage or salary. Labour is only free and voluntary in Socialism where there is common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution by all of society.

What of the capitalist Left and wage slavery? Rather than organising for its abolition they want to retain wage slavery and the wages system. They do not believe workers can ever understand the Socialist case for the abolition of the wages system. The capitalist Left want to lead the working class to more of the same wage exploitation but only with the capitalist left in positions of political power instead of current employers. It is merely replacing the old boss with the new boss. State capitalism and nationalisation is all the capitalist left can offer the working class.

To highlight the poverty and reactionary thinking of the capitalist left we only have to consider the following passage from the International Communist Party.

The struggle in defence of the combined salary of the working class is the fulcrum of the defensive economic struggle. The general workers' movement must once again put forward the historical demands of the workers' movement. - Significant wage rises, more in the worse paid sectors;
- Pay for workers who lose their jobs linked to the cost of living;
- Reduction of working hours but with wages remaining the same;
- No inequality of working conditions on grounds of sex, nationality or race;
- Rights of citizenship for immigrant workers and their families.

International Communist Party COMMUNIST LEFT NO 33 2013

Why should workers want to give their support to a political organisation who wants to retain wage slavery rather than abolish the wages system? Workers struggle on a day to day basis to try to improve their wages and working conditions both inside and outside trade unions. They do not have to be lectured to by the International Communist Party in order to pursue the class struggle economically for higher wages and better working conditions.

Within capitalism the ICP know that their “*Immediate demand*” has no basis for success. They are flagged up to create anger among non-Socialist workers who want “everything now” except the establishment of Socialism.

The strategy of the “*immediate demand*” is to bring angry non-Socialist workers within the ICP and use them as battering rams against the machinery of government. It will not be the leadership of the ICP who will have to face tear gas, baton rounds, mace, tazars, police dogs and horses and water cannon.

What workers should understand is that they cannot keep on struggling over wages in a class system when the capitalists own the machinery of production and distribution. The capitalist class are always at an advantage because they own the means to life.

The International Communist Party and similar Left Wing parties of capitalism do not exist to tell the workers to abolish the wages system. They tell workers to limit their horizons and accept wage slavery and to remain wage slaves. Even if the capitalist objective of the ICP were to be successful their state capitalist utopia would still retain the wages system, class exploitation and wage slavery.

The class struggle has to be a political struggle not for higher wages but to abolish the wages system; to get rid of capitalism and establish Socialism.

What of the “*Marxist*” credentials of organisations like the International Communist Party?

These political parties generally claim to be Marxist; but they in fact follow the anti-Marxist doctrines of Lenin based on Louis Blanqui’s theory of minority armed seizure of power followed by dictatorship of the Party and then one person. Another defective component of these anti-Marxist organisations is the fallacious view that the working class can affect a revolution without first gaining control of the machinery of government. As a policy it is political suicide. A Socialist majority cannot leave the machinery of government in the hands of the capitalist class and its political representatives.

The only political route through to Socialism by a Socialist majority is the revolutionary use of the vote and parliament. A Socialist majority will need to send Socialist delegates to Parliament to form a majority and ensure the machinery of government is not used to prevent the introduction of common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution by all of society.

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The Rehabilitation of Karl Marx.

Recent history has not been kind to Karl Marx. He is erroneously held responsible for the *coup d’etat* by the Bolsheviks under Lenin and the negative political consequences of Russian capitalism from 1917 to 1991 which cast such a dark shadow over the political understanding necessary for a working class majority to establish Socialism. And he is also wrongly blamed for much of the genocide of the 20th century – from the Gulags to Pol Pot. Following the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989 Marx’s theory of Socialist revolution became very unfashionable.

Even now Marx’s critics attack him without reading what he wrote. The economic journalist, Jeremy Warner writing in the DAILY TELEGRAPH (27 September 2012) said that Karl Marx can “*teach us nothing*” because, “*even though capitalism works badly, Communism did not work at all*”.

Yet Marx and his ideas are now a potent force once again as capitalism passes through yet another economic crisis and trade depression. Recently he was chosen by the BBC’s economic editor, Stephanie Flanders, as the third of three Economists (Keynes and Hayek were the other two) whose ideas, she believed, still had a bearing on today’s economic problems.

The economic ideas of Keynes and Hayek, of course, offer no understanding of Capitalism since they both reject the contradictions acting on commodity production and exchange for profit. They both fail to place capitalism within a historical context. Keynes gave powers to capitalist governments they just do not have while Hayek refused to accept that crises came out of capitalism rather than the errors of central bankers and politicians. And each economist starts their analysis of capitalism at the wrong point; with Keynes it was money; with Hayek it was the market. In fact the correct starting point is the commodity which is precisely where Marx started his analysis of capitalist production.

Nevertheless, the rapid rehabilitation of Marx demonstrates the power of his explanation of capitalism and why the BBC was forced to give an hour in peak time to his critique of political economy and his revolutionary conclusion that the profit system should be abolished consciously and politically by the working class.

The reason for Marx's continued interest is not hard to fathom. The Cold War is now part of history; and increasingly it is being recognised as not being an intellectual battle over fundamentally different ideas and beliefs of two competing social systems. What, in effect, the cold war amounted to was a conflict between two opposing capitalist powers, the US and Russia, over the raw resources, trade routes and spheres of influence of the world. This conflict has not gone away although the protagonists have changed their ideological clothes.

As for China, it is now seen to be nothing more or less than a capitalist country in its own right with a growing class of billionaires made rich by exploiting the working class in China and elsewhere in the world. Recently a leading Chinese government official attacked workers in Europe for being "*slothful, indolent and lazy*" (November 7th 2011) much to the approval of the DAILY MAIL which carried the story. The negative sentiments against the working class were not someone who could claim to be a Communist/Socialist! And, more recently, the Chinese Communist party praised the policies of the late Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher (DAILY TELEGRAPH 27th September 2012).

And the problems facing the world's working class remain unsolved; mass unemployment, class exploitation, poverty, war and social alienation. Marx's political and economic writings, like THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO, remain as relevant today as when they were first written. Over 26 million workers are unemployed in the European Community (EUROSTAT 2013) while 1.4 billion people on the planet persist on a dollar a day (WORLD BANK 17th February 2010).

Background to the Communist Manifesto

In 1847, as they made their preparations for social revolution, Marx and Engels founded an international association of workers. This organisation was called The Communist League and was, at first, a secret society. At a Congress in London Marx and Engels were asked to draw up a detailed theoretical and practical programme.

The programme Marx and Engels wrote was called THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO and was published in 1848 in France. It was quickly translated into French and English. As the revolutions across Europe were put down, THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO remained both a critique of a then emerging World capitalism and a point of reference for a working class to whom Marx and Engels saw as the conscious and political agents of revolution; "*What the bourgeoisie, therefore, produces, above all, is its own grave diggers*" they stated.

Although it was a joint Manifesto; Engels modestly played down his role. In the 1888 *Preface* to the COMMUNIST MANIFESTO, Engels wrote:

"The manifesto being our joint publication, I consider myself bound to state that the fundamental proposition which forms its nucleus, belongs to Marx" (THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO taken from *The Communist Manifesto and the Last 100 years* SPGB 1948 p.53)

The Communist Manifesto's Key Political Propositions.

What were the COMMUNIST MANIFESTO'S key political propositions? There were ten principle propositions applicable today as they were in 1848:

- 1). Human history has had different social systems. Each social system has its own particular social organisation that shapes the political and intellectual history of that epoch.
- 2). The forces causing change from one social system to the next is located in the contradiction between the forces of production and the social relations of production.
- 3). Since the dissolution of primitive communism, the whole of human history has been a history of class struggles between a class who own the means of production and distribution and class who does not; a class struggle between an exploiting class and an exploited class.

- 4). The class struggle has now reached a point within capitalism where the working class cannot free itself from class exploitation without once and for all “*emancipating society at large from all exploitation*” p. 56).
- 5). *Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeois today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class* (COMMUNIST MANIFESTO)
- 6). The working class must establish Socialism/Communism by its own conscious and political effort alone.
- 7). *The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority* (loc cit).
- 8). Every class struggle: “*is a political struggle*” (loc cit).
- 9). The working class of each country must: “...*first settle matters with its own bourgeoisie*” (loc cit).
- 10). *The working class must: “win the battle of democracy”*; that is, to win the battle of ideas.

These ten propositions lay the basis for the conscious political action of the working class to establish Socialism. There was to be no short cut to Socialism and no magic button to press. The political process to establish Socialism was not going to be smooth, linear and exponential. Until a working class majority established Socialism then capitalism would remain in existence and pass from one crisis to the next or lead to what Marx and Engels called: “*the ruination of both contending parties*”.

WAR AND THE WORKING CLASS

Some seventy-seven years ago the Socialist Party of Great Britain produced a superb pamphlet with the title Socialism and the Working Class explaining the Socialist position on the capitalist cause of war and its abolition by the working class through the establishment of Socialism.

The concluding words in the text were in bold type: “**Socialism must become the single aim of a politically-organised working class. Then capitalism and war will be no more**”. We in the Socialist Party of Great Britain today, still hold tenaciously to the single objective of Socialism. Others have added further “*meanwhile*” objectives and have as a result become part of the problem by being opportunist and ignoring or dropping the Socialist objective as the only solution to war. The one factor that undermines the anti-war groups like Stop the War Movement with their “*mean-while*” objectives is that they refuse to deal with the capitalist cause of war. They take sides in international conflicts; “*The enemy of my enemy is my friend*”. They will excuse torture and violence and death by one country or group of terrorists if it is against the US or Western Europe as though capitalism could be ranked by “*good countries and bad countries*” in such an absurd manner.

If those wanting to end war over the last 77 years had become Socialists, formed a Socialist majority and established Socialism there would now be no war and international conflict. We would not have to wake up and listen to the radio to find out if the US or Israel had dropped bombs on Iran or that North Korea had invaded South Korea and fired rockets at Japan. Unlike the Labour Party who has supported wars, large and small, the SPGB has opposed all wars on the basis of the interest of the working class. It is not in the interest of workers to support and fight in wars caused by capitalism and capitalist rivalry. Workers have an interest in abolishing capitalism, the cause of war and replacing a world artificially segregated into nation states into a world-wide system where there are no artificial boundaries and social harmony replaces conflict, violence and war.

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What We Said and When

FACT SHEET 5 : WHY LABOUR GOVERNMENTS FAIL

LECTURE SERIES 1986-1987

WHAT WE SAID AND WHEN

The evolution of the Labour Party is a practical confirmation of the theoretical case against reformism. With a working class that has never at any time understood or wanted Socialism, the Labour Party, instead of gradually transforming capitalism in the interest of the workers has itself been gradually transformed from a trade union pressure group into an instrument of capitalist rule (QUESTIONS OF THE DAY, March 1978).

We have no hope in Labour Governments or advice to offer to them; we do not hold that if they had been led by other men or had thought up policies the outcome would have been significantly different. As Socialists, our interest is in the vital issue of changing completely the economic structure of society (LABOUR GOVERNMENT OR SOCIALISM, February, 1968).

A Labour Government is going to try to straddle the class struggle and to represent at one and the same time the interests of the owning class, and of the class exploited by the owning class! Labour supporters expectantly and hopefully await the outcome. Socialists do not need to wait to prophesy failure (SOCIALIST STANDARD, September, 1945).

It is this fact that the explanation lies of the failure and collapse of the Labour Party in 1931...Try as they might the Labour Party could not combat the laws of the capitalist system which over-rode its reformist theories and forced its actions to conform with them (SOCIALIST STANDARD, July 1942).

WHAT THEY SAID AND WHEN

Never has any previous Government done so much in so short a time to make capitalism work (Right. Hon. Douglas Houghton, Labour MP, 25th April 1967).

I want industry to be profitable. It is in your interest that industry should be profitable. I want British Industry to be more profitable over the next 12 months than over the last 12 months. (James Callaghan, Chancellor of the Exchequer, 4th October, 1967).

There is little sign that death duties are doing more than holding their own against private accumulation of wealth (Douglas Jay, Financial Secretary to the Treasury in Labour Government, 17th January 1950).

In the early weeks, Mr. Callaghan was much missed by the hungry sheep who have looked up and failed to see and hear him (Sir Harold Wilson on Callaghan's failure to make greater use of television, 17th February, 1979).

It is important for us to start and maintain a dialogue with both sides of industry in the run-up to the next election. Trade Unions have accepted my offer of talks over the next few months. If the Confederation of British Industry is sensible, they will not allow themselves to be left behind (Roy Hattersley, Deputy Leader of the Labour party, 26th October, 1985).

THE LABOUR PARTY AND WAR

...in home affairs, the labour Party fails to make the clear-cut choice between Capitalism and Socialism, hoping always that goodwill and good intentions combined with careful planning will make it possible to administer the capitalist system that there will be a successful and continuous march towards the new social order. Capitalism makes a mockery of such hopes. It can only be administered in accordance with its own basic laws, the exploitation of one class by another, production for profit instead of production solely for use, and the never ceasing struggle for markets. Efforts to administer capitalism on lines incompatible with these basic laws are certain to fail and may even aggravate the position, since the expectation of profit is an integral part of the functioning of industry while in the capitalist hands. The problem facing the workers is, therefore, essentially the same now as it was in 1914 and in

1904, when the S.P.G.B. was formed. The cycle of war and peace has brought the Labour Party in 1942 back to the position it occupied in 1914-1918, with the same vain hopes now as when the S.P.G.B. first proclaimed it, that there can be no Socialism without socialists. Therefore, the paramount task is not that of trying to reform Capitalism either in office or in opposition, but that of making Socialists and organising for the change-over from Capitalism to Socialism
(*The Labour Party During the War*, QUESTIONS OF THE DAY 1942 Socialist Party of Great Britain p. 48).

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Francis Fukuyama and "The End Of History?"

“THE END OF HISTORY?” is a rhetorical expression attributed to Francis Fukuyama, one-time civil servant in the US government, now a celebrity academic feted by the media. It was Fukuyama who, in 1989, announced "*the end of history?*"; the definitive "*triumph of capitalism*" over any known or unknown competitor.

Fukuyama's essay, “THE END OF HISTORY?” was first published in the conservative magazine “*The National Interest*,” and later in 1992 as a book to become a standard text in course material for students studying the so-called “*collapse of communism*”, which in reality was the rapid collapse of the USSR and its Empire during the last two decades of the 20th century. Fukuyama argued that the victory of “*Western liberal capitalism*” closed any political debate about the merits or otherwise of different social systems, particularly between capitalism and Socialism. Western Capitalism and its economic and political institutions, he believed, was a portent to how the rest of the world would develop and evolve. Such was the optimism at the end of the “*Cold War*”.

Fukuyama wrote:

What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such... That is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government

Although the “*universalization of Western liberal democracy*” as he called it, was not taken by Fukuyama to mean the United States, his end of history doctrine was seized upon by a policy group known as The Project for the New American Century (PNAC), of which Fukuyama was a member. Victory in the Cold War against the USSR meant the triumph of the US – “*God's own country*” and “*the land of the free*” – and the imposition of its economic and political will onto the rest of the world. The conservative historian, Niall Ferguson, a true believer in the politics of the PNAC, believed that the torch of Empire has now been passed from Britain to the US as a force for good. At the recent 2011 Hay Festival in which he gave the Barclay Wealth Lecture, “*The West and the Rest*”, he said that “*the rise of Western domination of the world*” was the “*big story*” of the past 500 years. A “*big story*” for whom, we might ask? Not for “the rest”; the millions of men and women enslaved, pauperised and killed since the early seventeenth century as a consequence of “*Western domination*”.

However, the optimism about US capitalism stamping its image on the rest of the world was, of course, all before 9/11 and the rise of global radical Islamism, the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq by US and British forces with its subsequent plunder, torture, death and destruction, the collapse of market fundamentalism after the economic crisis of 2008, and the rise of China as a dominant economic and political force in its own right, forcing the US military to turn its attention to potential future conflict in the Pacific Ocean area.

A lot of water has passed under the bridge since 1989, and Professor Fukuyama also appears to have lost some of his earlier optimism that history has ended with the “*universalization of Western liberal democracy*”. In a recent GUARDIAN interview he was not so sure Western Capitalism would be the final political site for his original “*End of History*” pronouncement. In a new twist on history he believed “*liberal democracies*” could in fact decay and he viewed with dismay the growing forces of nationalism and fascism in Europe.

As he told the GUARDIAN journalist who interviewed him:

I don't think there's any particular reason why, if you are a liberal democracy, you can't decay. Your institutions can get too rigid; your ideas can get too rigid. I think right now a lot of developed democracies are going to have to renegotiate their basic social contract, because a lot of the welfare state arrangements are just not sustainable, and that's something democracies are really not good at. They aren't good at persuading people to pay higher taxes and accept cuts in benefit for the sake of something that's going to happen a generation from now (GUARDIAN 23rd May 2011).

What of Fukuyama's own understanding of Marx's conception of Socialism and a classless society? Of Marx's political concept of class, Fukuyama made the following observation in "THE END OF HISTORY?"

But surely the class issue has actually been successfully resolved in the West. As Kojève, (among others) noted, the egalitarianism of modern America represents the essential achievement of the classless society envisaged by Marx

The Russian philosopher, Alexandre Kojève, (whom Fukuyama mentioned in the above quotation), when writing in the 1950's at the height of the Cold War, argued that history had ended with the French Revolution and the coming to power of Napoleon, a view he mistakenly attributed to the philosopher W. G. Hegel. Kojève believed that since the late 18th century there had been no political or economic reason to establish any new social system because the universal application of the ideas of the French Revolution expressed in the phrase "*Liberty, Equality and Fraternity*" had rendered any further revolutionary politics unnecessary. Kojève even claimed, without an ounce of irony, that the United States of the 1950's with its racial segregation, poverty and class exploitation, had reached the end of history by realizing Marx's conception of communism.

However, Both Kojève and Fukuyama misread Hegel's philosophy of history and misrepresented Marx's Communism; a case of the blind leading the blind.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_End_of_History_and_the_Last_Man.

In his lectures on the philosophy of history, Hegel never actually mentioned the "end" of history attributed to him by both Kojève and Fukuyama. Writing within an, albeit, idealistic conception of history, he wrote: "... *the length of time is something entirely relative, and the element of spirit is eternity. Duration [...] cannot be said to belong to it*". (<http://www.hegel.net/en/faq.htm#2.1>).

Hegel's "*spirit of consciousness*" – moving and unfolding (entfaltung) through history had no termination point, neither in the Prussia of his own day, nor in the US of today. In his lectures, Hegel often considered the possibility of a further evolution of the "*spirit of consciousness*" within human history.

What of Marx? Marx dealt with the shortcomings of Hegel's philosophy of history; a shortcoming completely overlooked by Fukuyama. In the *Postface to the Second Edition* of CAPITAL, while acknowledging his debt to Hegel, Marx stated that Hegel had erroneously begun with thought and ideas and then proceeded to the material world, while Marx had started with the material world and then with its interrelationship with human thought. In short, Marx turned Hegel on his head. Yet, Marx's critical engagement with Hegel was passed over in silence by Fukuyama.

What of class and the class struggle? Has "*the class issue*" been successfully resolved in the West? And what is the reality of Fukuyama's claim for "*the egalitarianism of modern America*". The facts of life in the US do not accord with Fukuyama's political spin from the privileged position of his university professorship. In fact a recent study of inequality in the US undertaken by academics at the Faculty of Education at Stanford University where Fukuyama currently teaches showed the movement of inequality increasing during the period Fukuyama was celebrating "*the end of history*". We learn, that: ...*the ownership of wealth among households in the U.S. became somewhat more concentrated since the 1980s. The top 10% of households controlled 68.2 percent of the total wealth in 1983 and 73.1% of the total wealth in 2007* <http://www.stanford.edu/group/scspi/cgi-bin/facts.php>.

In 1989, the US was becoming even less equal and this trend has continued ever since; for by 2011: *The combined wealth of American billionaires grew from \$1.91trillion to \$2.06 trillion. The median wealth of American households is about \$77,000. This means the nation's 480 billionaires control as much wealth as 26.6million average American*

Of course Fukuyama was not alone in trying to trivialise and distort Marx's Socialist ideas. The end of the Soviet Union saw a concentrated effort by opponents of Marx to uproot his Socialist ideas altogether from working class politics. Tony Blair's New Labour went for "*partnerships*" between capital, labour and the State while keeping on the statute book all the previous Tory government's anti-trade union legislation. Capitalist Class, Working Class and class struggle were to be obliterated from the political lexicon. "*Hard working people*", yes; "*working class*" no!

In this context the "*End of History*" doctrine was seen as a chance by a group of conservatives in the US to end the political nightmare which had haunted the capitalist class since 1848. For over two centuries a Marxian critique of commodity production and exchange for profit had unsettled the conviction of politicians and economists alike that capitalism was "*the best of all possible worlds*". Marx demonstrated that capitalism was and is not the last social system in human history by focussing attention on a revolutionary subject; the working class. He contrasted the working class as it exists now, tied to capital, and how it could become as a conscious and revolutionary historical force; "*storming heaven*", as he once remarked to his friend, Ludwig Kugelmann.

Never has any one critic of capitalism put so much fear into the capitalists and their supporters. Engels remarked on this fear at Marx's funeral: "*Marx was the best-hated and most calumniated man of his time*". The political hatred towards Marx has continued unabated with the words "*Marxism*" or "*Marxist*" used by politicians to vilify their opponents. What of Fukuyama's own critique of Marx? If someone sets out to attack Marx's theory of history then surely that person should read what Marx wrote and not what he thought Marx wrote. The first requirement of anyone engaging in an intellectual debate is that he or she should be able to give a proper account of the opposing position but in the case of Fukuyama and his engagement with and critique of Marx and his theory of history such a proper account is not forthcoming.

Fukuyama is in a long line of intellectuals (Berlin and Popper are two others who spring to mind) who produce useful intellectual sound bites for the ruling class; "*Individual Liberty from the State*" in the case of Berlin and capitalism as an "*Open Society*" in the case of Popper. Political rhetoric, misrepresenting your opponent's ideas and *Ad hominen attacks* are always useful political tools for shallow politicians or academics that have no sound and valid case to offer against Marx's Socialist critique of capitalism. Fukuyama's starting point is not a critique of Marx's theory of history at all but instead the Leninist doctrine which he had encountered during the Cold War which justified the policies of the ruling class dictatorship in the USSR. However, what took place in the USSR from 1917 to 1991 and what Marx wrote on capitalism during his own life-time are two different things altogether. They have no connection; Marx no more led to Lenin than Darwin led to Hitler. State capitalism or nationalisation was not the same as the common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution by all of society. A totalitarian one Party State was not an association of free men and women. And the buying and selling of labour power, which predominated economic relations in the Soviet Union, was not "*the absence of buying and selling*" (THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO) or "*The abolition of the wages system*" (VALUE, PRICE AND PROFIT). Marx was well aware in his own day that defenders of capitalism wanted to portray capitalism as a natural and final social system in human history. In THE POVERTY OF PHILOSOPHY, Marx compared defenders of capitalism with theologians. Theologians claimed all other religions were historical and social constructions except their own religion which was natural and emanated from God.

Defenders of capitalism see all other social systems as transitory except their own which they hold as natural, omnipotent and everlasting. In many respects, "*The End of History*" was more theology than politics. Marx said that for defenders of capitalism to suppose it was the final social system in human history was a comforting fiction by which apologists of the capitalist class could flatter their employers: *They all want the impossible, namely, the conditions of bourgeois existence without the necessary consequences of those conditions. None of them understands that the bourgeois form of production is historical and transitory, just as the feudal form was. This mistake arises from the fact that the bourgeois man is to them the only possible basis of every society; they cannot imagine a society in which men have ceased to be bourgeois* (Letter to P. V Annenkov, December 28th, 1846 in MARX: ENGELS SELECTED CORRESPONDENCE MOSCOW 1975 p, 37).

The working class, for Marx, was and still remains the revolutionary political force in society necessary to replace capitalism with Socialism not a group of professional revolutionaries imposing what they believed to be "*Socialism*"

on the rest of society. The working class has not gone away; it still exists and the social problems it faces cannot be resolved by “*political democracy*”. Democracy, to have any real meaning has to be extended into production and distribution; not as co-operatives, nor as wider share ownership, nor as private pension funds, nor as “*worker’s shares*” nor as workers on boards of directors but as a pre-condition to enable production and distribution under common ownership to be organised to directly meet human need.

The “*The End of History*” and “*The Triumph of Capitalism*” are just empty rhetorical slogans. How can capitalism’s politicians permanently silence any dissent, questioning and political struggle for an alternative social system? To believe capitalism would last forever shows no understanding of capitalism; the problems it creates and the underlying contradictions which force these problems to the surface in the form of periodic economic crises and the class struggle.

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Standing At The End Of History?

To some political commentators, the metaphorical fall of the Berlin Wall when it was breached by thousands of East Germans on 7th November 1989 is considered one of the most important events of the 20th century. Two questions immediately present themselves; why and for whom? If the two questions are applied to the working class and working class interests the answer is not the one to be found in the history books written by the winners of the Cold War.

Workers have long stopped dancing on the streets of Leipzig and other East German cities, chanting out “*we are the people*”. The workers who escaped the GDR and its secret police did not escape from capitalism. The working class remained a working class with all the attendant social problems of living within the exploitive wages system no matter on what side of the wall they happened to live. Millions of workers in Eastern Europe took the promises of a bright new dawn at face value, only to confront unemployment, economic hardship, and social turmoil.

In fact, even some Capitalist politicians, like the late Margaret Thatcher, the British Prime Minister and Francois Mitterrand, the French President, wanted the Berlin Wall to stay up, fearing a powerful political and economic unified Germany. The winner was the capitalist class in West Germany with access to a pool of cheap labour and a potentially more powerful and effective German capitalism through its dominant position in the European Union and its competitive edge on the world capitalist market. In a recent book, GERMAN EUROPE, the sociologist, Ulrick Bech, commented on Germany’s growing economic and political power in the EU. He said that a unified Germany now differs from the 20th century in one important respect: “*Germany has no need to invade, and yet it is ubiquitous*”; it no longer unleashes a *blitzkrieg* but a *Troika*. The political response in Europe to the increasing imposition of German political and economic power is violence and an unpleasant nationalism, not Socialism.

Socialists have been told by intellectuals like Francis Fukuyama that the collapse of “*Communism*” signified the “*end of history*”. But where would we locate the “*end of history*”? One place to start would be where Marx’s political ideas are reputed to be buried; under the rubble of the Berlin Wall.

Although most of the wall dividing East and West Berlin has long been swept away to be replaced in many places by smart and expensive commercial developments and luxury flats, its memory still carries powerful political myths and illusions. Standard European History books celebrate the fall of the Berlin Wall, at whose periphery some 136 people died while trying to escape, as a defining historical moment when a totalitarian political and economic system disappeared for good. The received wisdom from the academic historians is that the fractured and fragmented wall represents a “*tomb stone*” for the political project begun by Marx and Engels with the publication in 1848 of the COMMUNIST MANIFESTO. The economist, Stephanie Flanders in her recent television programme on Marx, for example, tried unsuccessfully to link Marx’s critique of political economy outlined in his three volumes; CAPITAL with the former GDR regime. Ms Flanders was shown ominously walking around the bleak and forbidding rooms of the former Stasi headquarters (now a museum), located in the Lichtenberg locality of East Berlin, where political prisoners were routinely beaten, tortured and killed, as through Marx’s writings on capitalism were instrumental in

what happened there (MASTERS OF MONEY, BBC2 October 2012).

And for many others opponents of Socialism/Communism (both words mean the same thing), the fall of the Berlin Wall represents a freedom where millions can now enjoy the consumer utopia of Western capitalism with its “*free markets*” and shopping malls. Capitalism; the instant gratification society with its illusionary but childish advertising mantra of “*I, I, I, “me, me, me” and “I want, I want, I want”*. A social system whose only core aspirational value is “*to have and to consume*” rather than “*to be and to become*”; a society which pursues the illusion of money breeding more money as if by magic and whose role models for the young are the rich and privileged minority whose often empty and vacuous lives fleetingly pass across the pages of the Sunday supplements or Hello Magazine.

Walking along the Berlin Wall heritage trail with its graffiti-sprayed fragments of concrete and twisted reinforcement bars as well as bumping into the obligatory commemorative museums and art installations, are we really tracing out a temporal contour leading to “*the end of history*”? The reality of Berlin gives an altogether different answer to the image of Berlin presented by the German State authorities who host “*The fall of Communism*” jamboree with other European government leaders every decade or so.

The City of Berlin is itself bankrupt mirroring the bankruptcy of economic liberalism which had sketched out a capitalist utopia of aspirational smiling and happy consumers living out fantasy lives offered to them by the advertising industry, that is, before the economic crisis of 2008 with its subsequent trade depression and austerity programmes of pay cuts, unemployment and deep reduction in living standards. If Berlin’s yearly interest payable on its 68 billion Euro debts is represented by individual 100 Euro notes it would be 97 times higher than the Brandenburg Gate. There are few smiles and whoops of joy from the German capitalist class, who has to pay the interest of this debt out of their profits

As for the working class what freedom do they currently enjoy? There is the constant attack by employers on their wages and working conditions, the problem of unemployment, the intense competition for jobs and the constant exploitation of labour-power within the productive process with the generation of what Marx called “*surplus value*”. And there is the daily struggle to make ends meet; with a working class forced to carve out an existence in between pockets of unimaginable wealth and privilege – a Berlin which is now “*a global magnet for the fashionable and the rich*” (BBC NEWS 27th March 2013).

Correspondingly, 32 percent of former East Berliners now want to return to the days of the GDR; from the frying pan into the fire and back again. In the bleak housing estates which scar the Eastern sector of the City, an ugly and growing nationalism is rife. One of the fastest growing political groups is the neo-Nazis, like the 6,000 member National Democratic Party (NPD) who march through East German towns feeding off social alienation, anti-Semitism, fear of immigrants, no jobs and no future. At the end of 2012, a report found that as many as 16 per cent of former East Germans holds a “*Fixed extreme right-wing worldview*” (THE INDEPENDENT 30th March 2013). A capitalist utopia of glass and steel shopping malls is no good to someone who is unemployed or living on the minimum wage.

The political project begun by Marx is alive and well and for a very good reason. Marx’s politics of liberation for the working class has no connection, *contra* Ms Flanders and the BBC, with the totalitarian politics of the East German ruling class and its secret police. The establishment of Socialism has as its subject the working class not political leaders. Freedom for the working class is not freedom to shop but freedom from capital and the wages system.

Marx did not write for governments, *apparatchiks*, self-serving politicians and intellectuals. Marx wrote instead for the working class; men and women forced to sell their ability to work for a wage or salary. And he set down two important guiding political principles: “*the emancipation of the working class must be the work of the working class itself*” and “*the proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority*” (COMMUNIST MANIFESTO). Acted upon consciously and politically by a Socialist majority these are principles that will make history not end it.

The working class still has to act as a “*Class for itself*” (HOLY FAMILY, Marx). The demonstrable failure of capitalism to meet the needs of all society presses home the necessity for the conscious and political struggle by the world’s working class for a Socialist alternative. We are not “*living in the best of all possible worlds*”; we have not

come to the “*End of history*”.

Of course, when the Berlin wall did come down, politicians, academics and the media lost no time to launch themselves into a sustained propaganda campaign based around the slogan “*communism is dead*” erroneously concluding that Marx, the “*prophet*” of communism, had been finally discredited. The German State even retains a larger-than-life bronze statue of Marx and Engels, originally erected by the East German authorities in Schollossplatz in what was East Berlin, as “*a warning from history*” for those daring to believe there is an alternative to the profit system.

But Marx does give a warning from history; capitalism can never be made to work in the interests of the working class; capitalism creates conflict and contradictions it cannot resolve. The capitalist utopia offered by economic liberalism to the world in 1989 was an illusion masking uncomfortable truths about markets and the profit system. To borrow a phrase from Rudyard Kipling -*Then the Gods of the Market tumbled, and their smooth-tongued wizards withdrew* – (THE GODS OF THE COPY BOOK HEADINGS 1919).

As a result of the world economic depression and its impact on German capitalism, publishers and bookshops in Germany have all reported a surge in sales of Marx’s works. Most popular is the first volume of his major work, CAPITAL, read because the promise made by capitalism’s politicians to the workers in East Germany of the freedom to shop is as intellectually empty and socially alienating an experience as it is for workers in West Germany; a bound and closed world of commodities and commodity fetishism.

That Marx’s books are being read again reminds us that this was not always the case. On 10th May 1933, THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO and CAPITAL were unceremoniously burnt. A few miles away from the Berlin Wall, Marx’s books were taken out of libraries and thrown onto a large bonfire by university students and members of Hitler Youth. Other works burnt included the poetry and plays of Marx’s friend Heinrich Heine who had written prophetically in his play ALAMANSTOR the remark – now engraved on a plaque inset in Bebelplatz: *Dort, woman Bücher verbrennt, verbrennt man am Ende auch Menschen* (Where they burn books, they will in the end also burn people). An enclosed memorial library with no entrance door and empty shelves has been sunk into the middle of Bebelplatz with a glass plate set into the cobbles to mark the place where Marx’s books were burnt. There is some irony in using Berlin to question “*the end of history*”. The National Socialists (sic) thought that they too were standing at the “*end of history*” and about to establish a 1000 year Reich on the rubble of the Weimer Republic. Hitler’s racial State lasted for a mere 12 years; the Bolsheviks totalitarian regime lasted just 74 years and Pol Pot’s genocidal agrarian utopia a mere three years and eight months. Capitalism, too, is bounded by time; moving through history with an origin and potential termination in the class struggle.

However, as propaganda “*The Collapse of Communism*” has had a detrimental, albeit, temporary negative effect on the spreading of Socialist ideas. Few workers, at the moment, want to be associated with what they perceive to be a failed political theory even though in reality the case for Socialism has not failed at all. And joining organised political parties has also declined in popularity with anarchism and pressure groups a more fashionable vehicle for political dissent. The direct action associated with the Libertarian Socialists, Left Communists, Council Communists and Situationists dominate the thinking of “*radical*” university intellectuals who, while dismissive of the politics of Lenin and Trotsky, reject out of hand the revolutionary use of the vote and Parliament by the working class. And any form of planning of production and distribution has been temporarily tarnished by the demonstrable failure of USSR five year plans, nationalisation and centralization where even the production of nails and shoes required bureaucratic approval from the Soviet planners at Gosplan.

We are not living at the end of history. Instead we are passing through a stifling and claustrophobic political conservatism; conservatism not experienced since the end of the Napoleonic War. In 1814 a victorious aristocratic ruling class imposed the Treaty of Vienna on Europe confident they had seen off the political ideas associated with the American and French revolutions. A similarly conservative reaction exists today throughout Europe reflected in the growth of nationalism, racism and xenophobia on the one hand and an almost unquestioned acceptance of market fundamentalism on the other. However if there is a warning from the past to those who believe history has ended with the collapse of the Berlin Wall, it is this; 37 years after the Treaty of Vienna, the conservatism in Europe ended with the Revolutions of 1848; Revolutions which bought into the world THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO, a revolutionary Socialist political programme and capitalism’s gravediggers; the revolutionary working class.

Freedom of the Press

We have been asked to comment on the decision by the three main political parties to agree to set up a Royal Charter system of press regulation. Would this press regulation prevent the dissemination of Socialist ideas? We do not believe it will but the Socialist Party of Great Britain is no stranger to government censorship. In 1916 the War Office forbade THE SOCIALIST STANDARD from being sent abroad and The Defence of the Realm Regulations issued in November 1914 restricted what could or could not be written about the War, particularly: *“His Majesty’s relations with foreign powers, or spread statements or make reports likely to prejudice the recruitment, training, discipline, or administration of any of His majesty’s forces”*

In the Second World War censorship was more severe. The Defence Regulations introduced by Sir John Anderson in May 1940 were directed specifically against printed matter which persuaded its readers against support for war. This stated: *If the Secretary of State is satisfied that there is, in any newspapers, a systematic publication of matter which is, in his opinion, calculated to foment opposition to the prosecution to a successful issue of any war in which His Majesty is engaged, he may by order apply the provisions of this regulation to that newspaper*, The penalty for breaching the Regulations were 7 year’s’ imprisonment, a fine of £500, or both. According to Robert Barltrop the Socialist Party of Great Britain was forced into self-censorship. He wrote: *The Executive Committee (of the SPGB), after weighing how much it meant, decided not to risk the suppression of the SOCIALIST STANDARD and the penalties. The Party’s 1936 pamphlet, WAR AND THE WORKING CLASS was withheld, no further copies being printed to replace the sold-out editions, and from June 1940 The Standard no longer printed anti-war material* (THE MNUMENT: THE STORY OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN p. 107 1975)

We have no love for the capitalist press any more than we have for the capitalist State – it is merely an instrument of class coercion. Nor are we unaware of the powerful vested interests bankrolling the smug and sanctimonious Hacked-Off pressure group. As for the capitalist media, it wants the freedom to savage, smear, humiliate, bully and belittle anyone to whom it is politically opposed or just does not like. THE DAILY HATE and THE DAILY SPITE take great pleasure in rubbishing anyone who dares question capitalism and the profit motive. The experience of reading newspapers is like watching raw sewage spewing out of a pipe into the ocean. And of course the capitalist media is not free. Newspapers and journals are in the main owned by individuals or groups of capitalists with a political axe to grind and they are all hostile to the Socialism of the SPGB. We value our principled independence to put the case for Socialism and do not want to be associated with interests hostile to our own. Our response, therefore, to the whining of the capitalist media and the discomfort of the Government and its politicians over hurting its friend in the press is a plague on both your houses.

The American Nightmare

We Print Below an edited news item we have been sent taken from the GLOBAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION (5th April 2013). It illustrates the priority of capitalism; profit instead of human need.

Hundreds of poor people waiting outside of a closed grocery store for the possibility of getting the remaining food is not the picture of the “American Dream.” Yet on March 23, outside the Laney Walker Supermarket in Augusta, Ga., that is exactly what happened.

Residents filled the parking lot with bags and baskets hoping to get some of the baby food, canned goods, noodles and other non-perishables. But a local church never came to pick up the food, as the storeowner prior to the eviction said they had arranged. By the time the people showed up for the food, what was left inside the premises—as with any eviction—came into the ownership of the property holder, SunTrust Bank.

The bank ordered the food to be loaded into dumpsters and hauled to a landfill instead of distributed. The people that gathered had to be restrained by police as they saw perfectly good food destroyed. Local Sheriff Richard Roundtree told the news “a potential for a riot was extremely high.”

In Richmond County, there are about 20 evictions per day, and the area surrounding the supermarket is one of the poorest in the state. According to the last available data, the poverty rate is 41 percent. Many people in that parking lot probably knew all too well how evictions work, and were in desperate need of the food assistance.

In a capitalist society, the motive behind the production of food is not to feed people, housing is not made to give them shelter, clothing is not made to keep them warm, and health care is not offered primarily to keep people healthy. All of these things, which are and should be viewed as basic rights, are nothing other than commodities—to be bought and sold—from which to make a profit. If a profit cannot be made, usually due to overproduction in relation to the market, the commodity is considered useless by the capitalist and destroyed.

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Object and Declaration of Principles

Object

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

Declaration of Principles

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN HOLDS:

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (ie land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.
3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.
5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

8. The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

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email: enquiries@socialiststudies.org.uk | www.socialiststudies.org.uk